THE

UNITY

An Organ of Reasonable Religion.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."—*Tennyson.*

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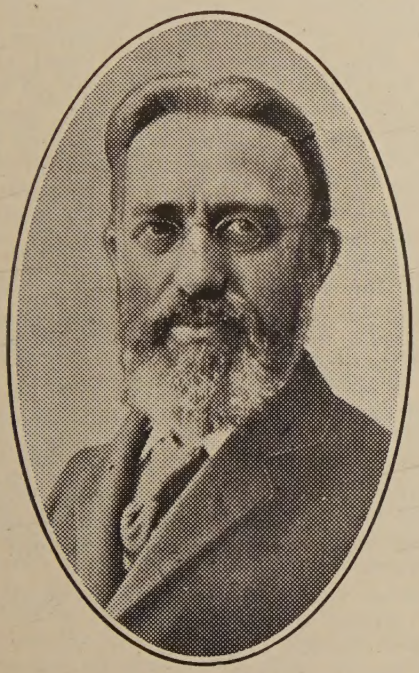
A UNITARIAN MAYOR.



Mr. Alderman Owen Balmforth, J.P.,

HUDDERSFIELD.

Born Feb. 28th, 1855, at Huddersfield; son of poor parents, his name "Owen" being after Robert Owen, the founder of the Co-operative Movement, of whom his father was a devoted follower. Left school at 10, became an office boy, afterwards head book-keeper and private secretary to his employer; was scholar and teacher in a Secularist Sunday School; was a member of a Literary and Debating Society under the presidency of the late Rev. J. Stannard; won scholarships at the Technical College in connection with Oxford University Extension Lectures, which enabled him to attend the summer meetings of students at Oxford for three consecutive years; in 1878 joined the Co-operative Movement, was chairman of the Education Committee of the Co-operative Society; member of the Education Committee North-Western District, and Education Committee Co-operative Union; opened Co-operative Exhibition National Co-operative Congress, Huddersfield, 1895; wrote a "History of Huddersfield" for that Congress, and is editor of "The Wheatsheaf," the monthly organ of the Huddersfield Co-operative Society. Mr. Balmforth has also passed through all the offices of the Court in the A.O. of Foresters, and has been prominently associated with Trade Unions and Friendly Society organisations; became member Huddersfield School Board 1883, re-elected triennially six times, was made chairman School Attendance and Bye-laws Committee 1892, School Management and General Purposes Committee 1898 to 1903, was then made vice-chairman Education Committee, in which office he still remains; he is a Governor of Huddersfield Technical College and of the Almondbury Grammar School, and vice-chairman of the latter, and is member Executive of the Northern Counties Education League; became a Town Councillor 1897, an Alderman 1904, is chairman of Public Library and Art Gallery Committee, served several years as a Governor of Huddersfield Infirmary, and was made a Justice of the Peace 1906. He is an advanced Liberal in politics. Though in early life a constructive Secularist of the George Jacob Holyoake school, he became associated with Unitarian Christianity during the ministry of the Rev. J. Thomas previous to 1884, attended regularly under the Rev. H. Rawlings, M.A., whose ministry began at Huddersfield in 1886; became a member of the Church and a teacher in the Sunday School, and continues so still. His brother, Ramsden Balmforth, who joined the Unitarian Church at about the same time, also became a teacher in the Sunday School, and afterwards, from 1894-97, was minister of the Huddersfield Unitarian Church, and since 1897 has been Unitarian minister at Capetown, South Africa. Mr. Owen Balmforth, the subject of this sketch, was elected Mayor of Huddersfield last November, and is filling that worthy office with credit to himself and to the community which he has so faithfully served.

Heir of the Ages.

Little store of wealth have I;
  Not a rood of land I own;
Nor a mansion fair and high,
  Built with towers of fretted stone;
Stocks, nor bonds, nor title-deeds,
  Flocks nor herds have I to show;
When I ride, no Arab steeds
  Toss for me their manes of snow.

Yet to an immense estate
  Am I heir, by grace of God—
Richer, grander than doth wait
  Any earthly monarch's nod.
Heir of all the ages, I
  Heir of all that they have wrought,
All their store of emprise high,
  All their wealth of precious thought.

Every golden deed of theirs
  Sheds its lustre on my way;
All their labours, all their prayers
  Sanctify this present day!
Heir of all that they have earned
  By their passion and their tears;
Heir of all that they have learned
  Through the weary, toiling years!

Heir of all the faith sublime
  On whose wings they soared to heaven;
Heir of every hope that Time
  To earth's fainting sons hath given—
Aspirations pure and high;
  Strength to dare and to endure;
Heir of all the ages, I—
  Lo! I am no longer poor!

—Julia C. R. Dorr.

How I became a Unitarian.—(vi.)

This subject is not only interesting from the point of view as to how anybody changed from orthodoxy to Unitarianism, but also from the opposite point of view, viz., how a man can move out of agnosticism into Unitarianism.

Is the reasonable religion of the Unitarian Faith not only a refuge from the superstitions of orthodoxy, but equally so from the unsatisfying character of anti-theistic Secularism, There are many Unitarians who are converts from orthodoxy, and there are many who were once "Secularists." It seems clear, therefore, that Unitarianism, instead of being the "half-way house to infidelity," as some orthodox people have said, is more correctly the refuge from that "unbelief" which characterises both these extremes of thought. Orthodoxy is full of unbelief in the INFINITE goodness of God and the natural goodness of man, and the Secularist movement stands for unbelief in the existence of God because the orthodox idea of God is so unbelievable. And as Unitarianism presents a picture of God which satisfies every longing of man's nature, and does violence neither to his reason nor to his moral sense and his emotions—it is quite natural that thoughtful orthodox people should prefer the conception that picture represents when they compare it with what has so long been theirs; and it is just as natural that thoughtful Secularists, who hitherto have known no better idea of God than that supplied by the orthodox, should, when they are shown one that is perfectly reasonable and appealing to the best that is in them—most gladly welcome it.

The case of Mr. Owen Balmforth, Mayor of Huddersfield, is one of many instances in testimony of this. In an interview reported by a press representative, he relates that:

"I attended the old St. Thomas' Church School . . . and St. Paul's Church School."

"Did you take the religious instruction?" he was asked.

"I believe my father said I was not to learn the Church Catechism, but the teacher insisted upon my learning it, for there was no conscience clause in those days, and, as a result, I used to play truant. As a boy I had two aspirations—to become either a newspaper editor or a lecturer; these may have arisen from my youthful zeal to reform public abuses, which, doubtless, I inherited from my father, and which was cultivated by my great fondness for reading, and listening to eminent platform orators like the late Charles Bradlaugh and others."

"From seven to twenty-seven years of age I was a scholar and teacher in the Secularist Sunday School, and was absent scarcely a single Sunday."

"You attend the Unitarian Church, I believe?" remarked the pressman.

"Yes; I was coming to that. In 1888, when the Rev. H. Rawlings was minister there, I commenced to attend regularly. I had occasionally attended when the Rev. J. Thomas was minister; but when Mr. Rawlings came I attended regularly, became a member of the Church, and commenced to teach in the Sunday School, which I have continued to do right down to the present time."

"Of course, you had hitherto been a Secularist?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Balmforth.

"But you changed your views?"

"Yes," was the answer.

"When I say Secularist, I mean you had been an Agnostic, not an Atheist?"

Mr. Balmforth said, "Yes, a Constructive Secularist. You know there were two parties of Secularists—the Bradlaugh school and the George Jacob Holyoake School of Constructive Secularism, and I followed Mr. Holyoake."

Mr. Balmforth "changed" his views from those of Secularism and embraced those of Unitarianism. In this he did what others have done. Men like the late Revs. William Mitchell and William Binns were once Secularists and Secularist Lecturers, and when they discovered a religious faith free from the unreasonable doctrines of orthodoxy and combined with the utmost freedom of thought, they welcomed it as good news.

How they became Unitarian is a story of how they came from a state of unbelief to belief; and in another way it is exactly the same with those who come from the orthodox; it is a journey from Scepticism to Faith, from Doubt to Conviction.—ED.

Who is Responsible?

Yes, who is responsible for the conduct of public worship? Everybody says—The minister, of course. But is he responsible for the choir, and the part which it takes in the conduct of worship?

These queries are suggested by the following from an American paper:—

A sailor had been to a cathedral and had heard some very fine music, and was descanting particularly upon an anthem which gave him much pleasure. His shipmate listened for a long time, and then said: "I say, Bill, what's a hanthem?" "What!" replied Bill, "do you mean to say you don't know what a hanthem is?" "Not me." "Well then, I'll tell you. If I was to tell yer—'Ere, Bill, give me that 'andspike, that wouldn't be a hanthem. But was I to say 'Bill, Bill, Bill, give, give, give me, give me that, Bill, give me, give me that hand, give me that hand, handspike, spike, spike, Bill, give, give me that, that, hand, handspike, hand, handspike, spike, spike, spike, Ah-men, ah-men, Bill give me that handspike, spike, Ah-men,' why, that would be a hanthem." On this a correspondent to the same paper made the following comment:

"I conclude it must have been 'a hanthem' I heard a few years ago in one of our Boston churches. The sailor's description helps me. I found myself one Sunday morning in one of our newest places of worship, attracted by the reports both of its beauty and the eloquence of its minister. Both of these, however, were quite thrown into obscurity by the high light of the singing. After a prayer that enlisted for me its eminent sincerity and suitability, a quartet rose over the preacher's head, and struggled in this way—

'O saving victim, slain for man,
O slain-for victim slain-for man-for victim
Slain-for, oh—for—victim slain for man!
O saving victim slain for man,
The gates of heaven for me expand—Ahh-men!'

Of course, I remember it. It is about the only thing I do remember. But I have often wondered what it was, and how it came to be in a Unitarian Church. After these years I am glad of a little light on the problem. It may have been 'a hanthem." But I'm sure it couldn't occur over the head of the present minister. If the minister is the conductor of the public worship, and the singing is a portion of that worship, then he is as directly and entirely responsible for the sentiment of the choir-loft as for that of the pulpit."

But is the minister responsible? Is that clearly understood between ministers and their congregations and church committees, and choirmasters? Do choirmasters usually consider that their work is subject to the wishes of the minister? If they do not, and are accountable not to the minister but to some other authority—then why hold the minister responsible?

If the words of choir music teach doctrines opposed to the faith advocated from the pulpit, or if the behaviour or condition or management of the choir are such as to be injurious to the proper conduct of worship, surely members of the congregation and Church Committee can see it as plainly as any minister can, and it is their business to put it right, and cowardly if they leave such business to be done by the minister—simply because it is a bit unpleasant.

The responsible authority is in every case the governing body of the church, and the executive which is appointed to act on its behalf. It is for them to see to it that choir and pulpit harmonise together, and to make it clearly understood under what conditions that must be secured.

A Prayer.

O Thou Infinite Spirit, who art always present, we know that we need not ask thee to remember us, and though in the weakness of our psalm we thus entreat thee, yet in the strength of our heart's prayer we know that thou needest no entreating, but rememberest us for ever and ever. O thou who art our Father, we thank thee that all day long thou hast us in thy perfect care, and when the night comes, and we lay us down, that thou still watchest over us, and givest to thy beloved even in our sleep. Father, we will not ask thee to draw nigh unto us, for thou livest and movest and hast thy being in all things that are, and most eminent in our own soul. But we will seek to draw near unto thee, that, warmed by the fire and strengthened by thy light, from the moment of our worship we may serve thee better all the days of our mortal life.

—From a Prayer by Theodore Parker.

If we cannot find God in your house and mine; upon the roadside or the margin of the sea; in the bursting seed or opening flower; in the day-duty and the night musing; I do not think we should discern Him any more on the grass of Eden, or beneath the moonlight of Gethsemane.

—James Martineau.

What is incredible to thee thou shalt not at thy soul's peril attempt to believe.—Carlyle.

"You should know my wife," said Matthew Arnold to an acquaintance, "she has all of my sweetness and none of my conceit."

"So should we live that every hour
May die as dies the natural flower—
A self-reviving thing of power;
That every thought and every deed
May hold within itself the seed
Of future good and future meed."

Why Attached to Unitarianism?

I am attached to Unitarianism because of its spirit of liberty and allowance. I know of no religious association among men where the rights of the individual conscience are so much respected, where a man can hold and publicly confess his own honest convictions so unmolestedly, where (for the number) so great a variety of individual opinion from personal reflection exists.

I am attached to Unitarianism because it regards all truth as homogeneous, and pursues it freely and faithfully under every form. It does not look upon Reason as teaching any truth opposed to Divine Truth, or Science as teaching any truth that can be opposed to Religious Truth. It has perfect confidence in the harmony of all truths.

I am attached to Unitarianism because I believe it to be, as Christianity itself, an eminently practical religion. I believe that, like the Gospel, it aims to teach men that there is no short and royal road to salvation, which may be sped in a moment, and the goal of which may be reached by the emotion of an hour, or the profession of a belief in the last or any previous moment of human life, but that the true salvation is a moral and spiritual process, and a moral and spiritual result, worked upon the soul itself by the disciplinary processes of life and of religion.

Unitarianism offers me, in Christ, not a substitute, but an incentive; not a warder off of a Father's curse, but a leader on to a Father's blessing; not a being to be good instead of me, or saved instead of me, or punished instead of me, but a being who will help me myself to go unto the Father, and who, by showing me this happy way to escape all the baseness and poverty of my life, and to reach a lofty world of light, and right, and purity, will be a true Saviour to me.

I am attached to Unitarianism because it does not sink me down, on the one hand, into the depths of despair, by telling me that God has made me, in Adam, a child of the Devil, of wrath, of utter, inevitable, hereditary depravity, in order that it may lift me up, on the other hand, into the heights of triumphant joy, by telling me that the same God has, in Christ, unmade the first work, and received me as a child of grace, and glory, and sanctification; but because it gives me just and rational views of my nature, views which coincide with the teachings of the Scriptures, with the universal facts of human history, and with the knowledge of my own heart; for it tells me that I am not by nature utterly depraved and incapable of any good thought and thing —and I know that I am not—but am capable of virtue and improvement, of the love of God and of good—and I know that I am—although at the same time it teaches me that I am ever liable to fall and err, and require the utmost exercise of my watchfulness, and culture, and diligence, and devotion, to keep me in the paths of righteousness and duty; and even at last, in the midst of so many sins or follies, needing the loving-kindness of the Almighty to take me, unworthy, unto Himself, and to accept the unequal and faltering step with which I have been striving to approach the Mount of His Holiness, for the firmer, steadier step with which I would fain have trod, and ought to have trod, that heavenward journey.

Yes! I am attached to Unitarianism because it teaches me that God is my Father! Tears may bedew my path of life, and trials press upon my progress, but I know that God is my Father! My children and my beloved ones may die away from me, and I be left desolate of their sweet companionship, but I know that God is my undying Friend and my upholding Father, and I do not feel alone. Misfortune may overtake me, weariness and grief depress me, pain and sickness crush me, but I lift my eyes above, and see the eternal light shining there, and know that God is my Father yet. I perceive that even I—with all my ignorance, and perhaps my negligence and my selfishness—am sincerely and heartily anxious to guide my children through that mingled discipline of instruction and command, of struggle and trial, on to the footstool of God and the home of the happy, because the home of the good; and I know that I have more reason for trust and confidence in MY Father than THEY have in THEIRS, for I have a Father above me who will never leave me nor forsake me, and who can never make a mistake.

Lastly, I am attached to Unitarianism because of the support and comfort it gives me, as regards the solemn world of the unseen future which awaits our race beyond the sepulchre of death. There I see no dread, irremediable, infinite separation between beings who have walked this earth together, and between the least worthy of whom among the saved, and the least unworthy of whom among the condemned, there has been no such moral or spiritual difference as to render just, or merciful, or possible, the distinction in that destination to eternal woe on the one side, or eternal bliss on the other. No! blessed be God, in parting even with the unworthy of this earth, my religion teaches me that the mercies of God are still living, even to that soul, amidst the punishing, it may be, but amending discipline of that solemn stage of being, in the great succession of worlds, on which it hath entered on leaving this. No parent among us lingers over the form of his dying child—no child among us watches by the couch of a departing parent—no brother or sister—no husband or wife—no friend or relative—no neighbour or companion, among us, stands in the presence of a departing spirit anguished by the racking doubt whether that soul is gone to its home of woe to suffer for ever, or gone to God, to be eternally at peace! No! we believe they are all still within the circle of those wide-embracing arms, all still under the guiding discipline of God, in the home of their Father—some, indeed, enjoying at once the sweet peace which is the reward of their own pure lives; and some reaping, in the continued discipline of their future home, the whirlwind which has sprung from the wind themselves have

sown; but all to move on through the world that succeeds world, and the life that follows life, under the wisely directing hand of their Creator, till the last enemy, sin, should be subdued, and God, our Father, shall be all in all.

(From a lecture by Charles Wicksteed—abridged by Centonarius.)

Religion for Young People.

By the Rev. J. A. PEARSON.

The importance of the Gospels rests upon the teaching they contain and the record they give of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus believed in one God, and taught men so. He is to-day acclaimed as the great teacher of Christendom, and a word from him is "final for confirmation." But probably the majority of those who call themselves Christians believe that Jesus was God, and teach men so, although they point out that there is only one God still. God, some people declare, must be regarded as a trinity. Dr. R. F. Horton says this is "a necessity of thought," but admits that the word cannot be found in the New Testament. If you ask how God can be a trinity, three in one, nobody can tell. Not very long ago people spoke and acted as though there were two separate gods. Rev. J. M. Wilson, when Archdeacon of Manchester, declared that in his young days the worship of many people was "sheer di-theism," that is to say, people worshipped two gods—God the Father and God the Son. Accordingly, as his contribution to correcting the mistake, and in order to restore the third person of the trinity to the place of honour, he wrote many sermons and published a book.

If you read the Gospels for yourselves you will not find that Jesus ever taught anyone to worship any but God, whom he called Father. Yet men do worship Jesus, and seem to find it easier to enjoy communion with him than with God. Jesus enjoyed such communion with God that, according to John, he could say, "He that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me" (12-45); and "I and the Father are one" (10-30). There is a confident assurance about these two sayings that will prevent them from becoming common, and yet there are men and women of our own day who are so devoted to the New Commandment, in its practical application in the service of humanity, men and women whom we understand and respect, that we should not be surprised to hear them, in the ardour of their devotion, repeating them. If we listen to Jesus as a teacher, we shall enter into his spirit, hold communion with him; but we shall not stop at that, we shall seek to attain to what he held up as altogether desirable, communion with God who is the Lord of heaven and earth.

My statement that it was "rather startling to find how few young people could say they had read any one of the Gospels through," seems to have been doubted by at least one person. I should like to hear from my readers what they have to say on the matter.—J.A.P.

* * * *

The old Emperor William I. of Germany, on a visit to an orphan asylum, after listening to the recitations of several pupils, called to him a little girl of five, whom he took on his lap. "Now, little one," said he, holding up an orange, "to what kingdom does this belong?" "To the vegetable kingdom, sir." "Very good, very good, my dear. Now tell me to what kingdom this belongs," drawing a gold piece from his pocket. "To the mineral kingdom, sir." "Better and better," said the Kaiser, patting her golden-haired head. "Now look at me, and tell me to what kingdom do I belong?" What could she say? She looked up into the aged Emperor's kindly face, and then answered: "To the kingdom of heaven, sir." This brought tears to the Emperor's eyes. "Ah, little one, I hope so—I hope so. I do hope I belong to God's kingdom."

"Dr. Doane, I did enjoy your sermon this morning," said Mark Twain; "I welcomed it as an old friend. You know, I have got a book at home containing every word of it."

Dr. Doane flushed up. This sermon was perfectly extempore, and an ambitious effort.

"I'm quite sure you haven't, Mr. Clemens," he said, indignantly. "It's quite impossible. That sermon was my own from beginning to end."

"Well, I know I have," said the humourist calmly.

"Send me the book then; I should like to see it."

Next morning Dr. Doane received—an unabridged dictionary!

In June, the Hope-street Church, Liverpool received from an anonymous friend a gift of £2,500, bearing interest at 4½ per cent. per annum. The gift was free of restriction, and was to be used for general church purposes. In offering this splendid donation, the giver expressed his reverence for Dr. Martineau, and his admiration for the present Minister, Rev. H. D. Roberts, not only in his ministerial duties, but also in his endeavours towards Social Reform. It was a magnificent offering, and a most gratifying way of showing appreciation of the work being done by Hope Street Church.

The Rev. John Birks says that "the young people of many Unitarian churches grow up without any particular teaching being imparted to them. Instead of being educated by doctrine, they were fed an sentiment, and had no vigorous church life to sustain them, and they drifted easily into any church that happened to attract them." The members of Unitarian churches know whether that is true or not; and in any case they need to see to it that it shall not remain true.

A limited edition of Essays and Poems, by the late Rev. H. Kelsey White, is now published as a memorial volume at 2/- by J. R. Tutin, Albert Avenue, Hull.

Deep Love.

Deep love underlieth
These pictures of time;
They fade in the light of
Their meaning sublime.

Love works at the centre,
Heart-heaving alway;
Forth speed the strong pulses
To the borders of day.

—Emerson in "The Sphinx."

For All or None.

By the Author of "Randal's Principle."

CHAPTER VII.

Dick Colton was as good as his word. By some sneering remarks, when in drink, he had poisoned the mind of Robert Colton, his elder brother, against Will Smeeton's moral character. This, added to theological prejudice existing in Robert's mind, certainly set him more against Will. But Dick explained that he knew nothing whatever against the moral character of Will Smeeton, and that any sarcastic remarks he had made when not in a sober condition had not a shadow of truth behind them in any reflections they implied.

And Dick also told Ruth, and, what is more, he asked her pardon for having unwittingly added to the mischief already made.

Whatever effect Dick's avowal had upon Robert Colton, it was unmistakable upon the mind of his daughter Ruth. She believed in Will more than ever, and was determined to be steadfast and loyal to him. But her father's heart was still hardened.

In the meantime, Will himself wondered what was the state of Ruth's feelings towards himself. He knew that on his account there was an estrangement between Ruth and her father. Ought he to release her from her pledge to himself? Was it selfishness to hold her to it against her father's wish? Would it not be yielding to selfishness to surrender her to her father's self-will—especially if, as he believed, it would be against Ruth's own wishes. Will believed in Ruth, and trusted to time for the righting of the matter. And if only he would own to it, he would admit, as he had done before, that he could not give Ruth up, and would not, so long as she consented to be his.

Yet life means far more than mere self-concern. This was made frequently evident to Will. And just now, in the open street, as he walked, it was to be made evident to him. He was about to turn a corner, and a little child ran against him with such force that it fell at his feet in the rebound from the impact. There it was on the ground, a dirty little thing—screaming out loudly, more frightened than hurt. He lifted it up instantly.

"Here! I want that child," said a man who hurriedly approached. "The little brat ran away from me."

"Is it yours?" asked Will.

"Mine? No—that it isn't. But I have to take it to the poorhouse."

"Has it no parents?"

"None that can be called such. It's mother is a hopeless character, and she is now in prison for being picked up in a helpless and drunken condition, and she has no husband, and the child has never known its father."

"Poor thing!" said Will. "What will become of it?"

"God knows; I don't," replied the man; "only I have to take him in charge."

"God knows," repeated Will audibly. And another man, who had heard what passed, said to him, "You may well echo 'God knows,' for who else can tell what is to become of a little arab like that?"

"I can," said Will. "That child will reach the highest destiny. He will be ranked amongst the grandest and the noblest. He is yet an unworked mine of riches, an uncultivated garden of tremendous possibilities. That child, sir, is a miracle, and will become a glorious and heroic character."

"Perhaps somebody's told you," retorted the man with a sceptical kind of smile.

"Yes, somebody has told me. There's a voice within that tells me this must be. I cannot see why that child is here at all if it will not be so. Its being alive is a waste and an utter failure unless it becomes what I have said."

"Oh, then, you are not one of that sort that goes to the Bible for everything? I should have thought you would have repeated some text of Scripture in evidence of your astounding declaration. But you simply rely on your own imagination."

"No, sir, not my imagination, but my conviction. It flashed upon me in an instant when I was gazing at the child. I saw it as a vision, but so clearly that I feel sure of it. And if a thing is true, it is true, whether it be in the Bible or not in the Bible. But I might have said that the Bible tells me so. It says that it is God's will that 'not one of these little ones shall perish,' that 'of such is the kingdom of God,' that 'each shall be perfect.' What can you have more clear than that?"

"That's all very well," said the man, who seemed to be enjoying the operation of drawing Will out; "but why do you say all this of this child in particular? Do you know the child? Have you seen it before? Has it shown any evidences of genius?"

"I would say it of any child, sir. We are all created for the same high destiny, and God's purpose cannot fail in any one of us."

"O-ho! Come, my friend, is not that going too far? Do you really mean that the very off-scourings of the earth, the wastrels of humanity, that child, and that child's mother, will reach the height of the best, the purest, sweetest, and most beautiful; that those who are most degraded and corrupt will ever be fit to mix amongst the most perfect. Dear me, that is surely a very extravagant idea."

"Yes, it is. Just as extravagant as thinking that

a dusky diamond buried in the dirt of the earth can ever be a sparkling crystal, or that the beautiful petals of the rose of summer can ever grow out of a dung heap."

"And you believe this possible, not in a few only, but in all?"

"Yes, I do—in all or none. If in one, surely in all."

"And when is it to be—in the next world, I presume?"

"In the next world certainly, if not in this. In this world, too, when a sufficient number of us come into a right mind and secure equal opportunities to all to make it possible."

"Well, well, young man, your faith is tremendous."

"And yet, sir, I am considered a sceptic."

"Why?"

"Because I refuse to believe that any will be lost."

"Ah! I thought so. The sceptic is again the greatest believer."

(To be continued.)

Postal Mission Work.

By Miss FLORENCE HILL,

Hon. Sec. Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers' Union.

We have received a most satisfactory account of the Bombay Postal Mission, which, under the able management of Mr. Shinde, has made wonderful progress. Some years ago, when Mr. Shinde was in London, he visited the Central Postal Mission and thoroughly mastered the principles and the methods of work. He was convinced that it would be very well adapted to India, and on his return to Bombay, in conjunction with several friends and aided by a grant from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, he set to work to organise a postal mission, with excellent results. The cultured classes read the literature in English, but Unitarian books and tracts have also been translated into Marathi, so that they may be circulated amongst the mass of the people. Mr. Shinde's report runs as follows:

"The Brahma Postal Mission was established on Jan. 22nd, 1902, the object being to spread knowledge about the Brahma and Prarthana Samaj in India and other Liberal Religious movements in the world by postal correspondence and by free distribution and cheap sale of books and pamphlets.

The Mission has been able to show a very great increase in its work during the last year, viz., its fifth year, which ended on the 22nd of January, 1907. The total number of books and pamphlets distributed and sold in 1906 was 5,719, as against 1,739 in 1905. This was partly due to a large supply of Marathi pamphlets which the Mission was enabled to print by a grant of money made by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, London, and a grant of English books and pamphlets made by the same Association, and the 560 pamphlets received from American Unitarian Association. But it was due mainly to the fact that the work is now well organised, and that the assistant, Mr. Sayyad Abdul Kadir, has been efficiently doing the work as a labour of love.

An essential part of the Mission work is that of constant correspondence with inquirers. During the year 1906, 234 letters and enquiries were received, and more than 183 letters and despatches were sent out. The following are very brief quotations from the mass of correspondence.

Translated from the letter of a Mahomedan gentleman of Malwan in Western India:

"I cannot but congratulate the Brahma and Prarthana Samajes on spreading the true religion at a time when the religious animosities, superstition, and evil customs are very slowly abating. With some friends I am trying to serve the same cause in this part, and want the help of your Mission."

A correspondent writes from Vizagapattam, Madras: " . . . I am paying my best attention to the perusal of the books. I have completed reading of all the books, and I am again going through them. As soon as I finish my second reading I shall circulate them among my friends."

A lowcaste preacher, who is largely benefited by the Mission, reports from the Central Province and asks for more pamphlets: When I had been to Akola I found there twelve young men of the Mahar caste strongly inclined to the Liberal Faith. An English educated Mahar youth is trying to organise a Samaj for them."

A student from Nabha, in the Punjab, says: "I heartily thank you for your kindness. The pamphlet on miracles was of peculiar interest to me. The doubts that were still lurking in my mind about this important question have now become clear to me. The other pamphlet has done me equal good by putting before me the life of the true lover of God."

A European Captain writes from Naini Tal, U.P.: "I am perusing the books with the very greatest interest. My case is a somewhat unusual one. I find that as a result of fifteen years' thought and study I have arrived at all the conclusions of modern Unitarianism independently, and this by way of Calvinism and (so-called) agnosticism! . . . what is entirely new to me is, the identity of the Theism of Brahmoism with that of Liberal Religious thought in Europe. I cannot help feeling that in this fact there is a far-reaching political significance."

A new inquirer writes from St. Julian's village, Prince's Town, Trinidad: "I had the good fortune some time ago to read the Life and Teachings of Keshub C. Sen. Since then I longed for a larger knowledge of the Brahma Samaj. I was born in the above island of East Indian parents. East Indians comprise one-third of the population of this island, and not many know much of the Reformed Faith of the Motherland."

Since the beginning of this year two copies of every issue of the Hibbert Journal are circulated among the advanced section of the correspondents, who seem to like this arrangement very much.

If donors, editors, and publishers of Liberal Religious literature enable the Mission to carry on this most useful work on a larger scale, it will certainly show marvellous results without any friction or fuss whatsoever.

People feel right but think wrong; from their wrong thinking come wrong acting, and finally wrong feeling.—Whittier.

Literature.

"The Secret Fancies of a Business man," by James R. Beard; 2/6 net; Sherratt and Hughes, 60, Chandos Street, London, W.C.; 34, Cross Street, Manchester.

A book of verse from a well-known Unitarian, whose portrait and biography appeared on our January front page. The preface, even, is written in rhyme. In this the author frankly states:

"I claim for nothing that is here set forth,
Talent or power or aught of greater worth,
Than this—It may hap that my words reveal
Some thought with which you sympathy can feel,
At least so far as this, it shows you more
Of me, your friend, than you had known before."

Which is perfectly true, for no doubt many of Mr. Beard's friends and acquaintances will by this book discover for the first time that he has been in the habit of writing his secret fancies in the shape of poetry. The fifty-six pieces here contained in an attractive volume of 107 pages are very various. They change from grave to gay, from lively to severe. There is much humour, and there is pathos. Some of Mr. Beard's "fancies" are of the lightest kind—as they should be—and some are of the deepest, and rightly so. In description of homely joys, of travel scenes, of beauties of nature, and of various kinds of people, he has a happy choice of language clearly expressive of his meaning. The affections, the passions, and the pieties of life are touched with a strong yet delicate hand. Some of these compositions reveal a fervent religious faith. In the "Ode to the Divine" this is strongly and gracefully declared, as also in other efforts. Limitations of space only permit of two brief quotations—one on "Pain"—

Though Life be pain, there's yet a gain
In every deprivation;
Struggle and fighting make of men
A nation.

Whate'er God's plan, 'tis plain that man
Is meant for higher issues;
And pain is but the stretching of
The tissues.

And as each sting our spirits wring,
We comfort find in knowing;
The pain we suffer only shows
We're growing!

and the other on "The Great Assize"—

The priesthood say,
"Fear Judgment Day,
God's justice own, and laud it."
The Soul replies, "'Tis every day
God holds His audit!"

"The Parson" and "Queer Folk" would make good recitations, as also the two ballads of "The Dying Girl" and "A Funeral at Sea." Mr. Beard's numerous friends will be pleased to meet him in this poetical dress, and many others who know him only by repute will find here a clear reflection of a wise, witty, sociable, and genial man. We commend these "Fancies" to the consideration of our readers in confidence that much contained therein will be sure to take their "fancy," if they only get the book for themselves.

"Aspirations," used in Flowergate Old Chapel, Whitby, from 1903 to 1906, partly compiled and partly written, by Francis Haydn Williams, Minister of the Chapel; 6d., postage 1d.; Henderson's, 16, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., or from F. H. Williams, 177, Church Street, Whitby.

Mr. Williams, who has attained to exceptional notoriety as a protestor against aristocratic land-grabbing, and who is possibly a much misunderstood man owing to his methods of action, might well consent to be judged by these "Aspirations," which are certainly of the highest order. People who dissent from his eccentricities of word and deed will find little in this book which they could not accept. Mr. Williams gives its contents the name of "Aspirations"; others would call them "Prayers." Though he has attempted to exclude from them "all theistic implications," he has not succeeded. "Aspirations which begin: "We stand in solemn awe of the Mighty Power which brought this Visible Universe into being, and which sustains all things in Heaven and Earth; the Parent and Supporter of all we see,"—or "We stand in reverential awe of the Eternal and Infinite Being, the Life of all that lives"—do imply a personal God and Father. It would be difficult to find prayers anywhere more spiritual, more devotional than these "Aspirations" to that Power which called us into being"; they are full of a faith that is beautiful, inspiring, and uplifting. These 50 "Aspirations," printed in good readable type, making a book of 54 pages in good cloth binding, would be most helpful in any household, Sunday school, or Free Religious pulpit; they could be used as "prayers" by the aid of an introductory sentence addressed to the Deity—"the Eternal and Infinite Being, the Life of all that lives." This little volume, so lofty and pure in its sentiments and free from much that is objectionable in many "prayers," would be a delightful and startling revelation to people whose opinion of Mr. Williams is formed only on newspaper reports of the public struggles in which he has been engaged.

"Jesus of Nazareth—an Historical and Critical Survey of his Life and Teaching," by Etienne Giran, Pastor of the Old Walloon Church, Amsterdam, translated by E. L. H. Thomas, B.A.; 2/- net; Sunday School Association, Essex Hall, London, W.C.

A remarkable and intensely interesting book. In a marvellously clear and graphic manner the author, through his translator, lays bare the results of the work of New Testament critical scholarship, takes his readers through simple analytical processes, enabling them to dissect the gospel records for themselves and to judge what is unhistorical and what is true. With this little volume in his hand, the intelligent reader who has also the ability to write is able to compile from the New Testament an approximately accurate account of the life and teaching of Jesus, stripped of later accretions from popular imagination and conflicting schools of early Christian thought. Much illumination is thrown upon all questions of the miraculous, and upon many other matters which usually perplex the minds of all interested in the gospel records. It may be that the view here given, that Jesus came to believe himself to be the Messiah, supported though it be apparently by good evidence, is still open to doubt. But this book is just the guide that is needed by those who wish to form their opinions on these matters solely on the basis of reason and commonsense. It is thoroughly rationalist and reverent, and serves the purpose of a good commentary on the most difficult and perplexing passages—from a Christian freethinking point of view. The translator, Mr. Thomas, who is most modest in having no word to say, and no mention of himself except the bare record of his name on the title-page, has placed English readers under a considerable debt of gratitude in opening this useful work to their understanding, and in such an excellent manner that they and the original author, M. Giran, are equally fortunate in the translator. This is the kind of book that makes the Sunday School Association a friend in need, not merely to Unitarian Sunday school teachers, but to the "New Theology" people who do not take that name, but who cannot find the text books of their hearts' desire in any other quarter.

Notes and News.

Magnificent meetings have been held in connection with the Van Mission at Loughboro', Coalville, Biggleswade, Normanton, Dewsbury, Ossett, Burton-on-Trent, Longton, Luton, Stafford, and other places. At Coalville the audience numbered 1,000 persons. At Stevenage, near Hitchen, the local authorities would not allow a Van meeting, but open-air meetings of protest against this intolerance were held, and the Van paraded the village meanwhile, and was kept moving within a space of about 100 yards as an advertisement.

The following academic distinctions, amongst others, are reported of Unitarian students at colleges this midsummer: Home Missionary College students—Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Harvard, U.S.A.) to Mr. Edgar Thackeray, M.A.; Bachelor of Divinity (Victoria University) to Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A.; Bachelor of Arts (Victoria) to Mr. Walter Short; B.D. special subject passed, Mr. Edward Morgan, B.A.; Six passes in first-class and four prizes (Victoria) to Mr. Lawrence Clare. Owens College Students: Master of Arts degree to Mr. Leonard Agate, B.A.; to Miss Gladwys Evans, B.A.; B.A. honours to Mr. Leonard Clarkson, jun.

After our last issue was in type it was announced in the King's list of birthday honours, that the Right Hon. Sir James Kitson, M.P., who is a member of the Mill Hill (Unitarian) Chapel, Leeds, and who was also for many years a teacher in the Sunday School connected therewith, had been raised to the Peerage; and that Mr. W. B. Bowring, of the Hope Street (Unitarian) Church, Liverpool, had been made a baronet. Mr. Bowring, a kinsman of the late Sir John Bowring, who wrote the hymn "In the Cross of Christ I glory," is President this year of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

THE BOWRING ESTATE.—On June 12th, Alderman W. B. Bowring formally presented to the Lord Mayor of Liverpool (Mr. John Japp) the deeds of the Roby Hall Estate, to be for the use and advantage of the Citizens of Liverpool for ever. Mr. Bowring said he was grateful that the organisers of that day's ceremony had associated with it the name of his father, placing his father's photograph on the programme of the proceedings, as well as his own and Mrs. Bowring's. It was, he said, his good fortune to have had a father who, by precept and example, taught him the blessings of municipal and public work. The Lord Mayor, in accepting the Estate on behalf of the City, presented to Mr. Bowring a handsome silver box containing a bound copy of the programme and the Vote of Thanks of the Council. The Estate consists of 80 acres of pasture land and 20 acres of gardens and shrubberies, together with the mansion and all connected buildings upon it. This noble gift to the City of Liverpool commemorates the fact, that Mr. C. T. Bowring the father, and Mr. W. B. Bowring, the son, together make up half a century of service in the City Council. We may well feel proud of the service, the giver, and the gift.

The Rev. Robert Collyer, of New York, often called "Dr.," is to have an English University degree of Doctor conferred upon him during his visit to this, his native country. He comes to open the Ilkley Free Library, and the Leeds University will confer upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. He was a Methodist blacksmith near Ilkley in his early days, and went to America, became a Methodist preacher, afterwards a Unitarian, and since then a distinguished citizen of U.S.A. as a Unitarian minister. He is nearly 84 years of age.

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